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AN ACCURATE DISCRIPTION OF THE MARRIAGE CEREMONIES USED BY Every NATION in the WORLD:

Shewing, the oddity of ſome, the abſurdity of others, the drollery of many; and, the real or intended piety of all.

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Marriage Ceremonies of the Jews.

THE bethrothed couple meet in a room under a canopy with muſic, and frequently children ſing round them with flambeaus in their hands. The bride makes three turns about her huſband; and the bridegroom makes two obout her. They throw ſome grains of wheat on the married couple, crying out, *Increaſe and multiply.* The bride takes the right hand. They then cover the heads of both bridegroom, and bride. This ceremony being over, one of the prieſts, or one of the neareſt relations take a cup full of wine, and after having bleſſed God for creating mankind & inſtituting marriage, preſents the cup to the bride aud bridegroom. After this the bridegroom puts a ring on the bride's finer in the preſence of two witneſſes, and ſays, Thou

art my wife according to the rites of Moſes and Iſrael. After which the inſtrument is read, in which the portion brought by the bride and the huſband's obligation to a jointure, are particularly ſpecified. Soon after another cup of wine is brought and the bride and bridegroom drink again, and the reſt of the wine is ſpilt in mirriment. The bridegroom then breaks the empty veſſel: the intent of which ceremony is to remind of death, to which frail mortals muſt yield ſooner or later. This being over, all preſent cry out, *Mazal tou*, good luck, and ſo the ceremony ends. In the evening they give an intertainment to their friends and relations. The bride is not put to bed to her huſband till after ſhe is bathed, and the bath would be invalid if ſhe wore ſo much as a ring; for ſhe muſt be waſhed from head to foot, over head and ears. When the marriage is conſumated, the bridegroom muſt leave his bed, and not come near his wife for a certain time, and ſhe muſt be bathed all over again.

Marriage Ceremonies of the Church of Rome.

AFTER the banns are publiſhed thrice before marriage, on three ſundays or holidays; the bridegroom and bride, with their attendants, aſſemble at the church, and the prieſt in his way to the altar, is preceded by one or two clerks in their ſurplices; theſe carry the holy water pot, the ſprikler, the ritual, and a little baſon to put the ring in, in order to bleſs it. The prieſt, after having pronounced the prayer for the couple, advances towards them on the laſt ſtep of the altar, the man ſtanding all the while on the woman's right-hand: behind them ſtand the relations and witneſſes. He then addreſſes the man and aſks him, Whether he will have ſuch a one for his wife: He aſks the woman in likemanner, Whether ſhe will have ſuch a one for her buſband. When both their conſents are given, the prieſt who was before covered, uncovers himſelf, takes the couple by the hand, & makes them

join hands, ſays, *I join you together in marriage*, &c. At the ſame time he makes the ſign of the croſs towards them with holy water. This being done, he bleſſes the wedding ring and ſprinkles it with holy water, in the form of a croſs; he then gives it to the man, who puts it on the wedding finger of the woman's left hand. This ring is looked upon as a pledge of the chaitity and fidelity which the wife owes her huſband. After this the prieſt pronounces ſome prayers, and then addreſſes an exhortation to the married couple and the aſſembly, which is followed by maſs; and after this, he ſprinkles them again with holy water. The married pair muſt ask the prieſt's benediction of the marriage-bed. In giving this bleſſing, the prieſt prays, that thoſe who are to lie in this bed may increaſe and multiply. The ſanctification is compleated by the ſprinkling of holy water.

Marriage Ceremonies of the natives of Hudſon's Bay, &c.

THE ſavage inhabitants of this Bay, marry as many wives as they can

maintain. It is likewiſe cuſtomary for them to marry the ſiſters of their wives; and that nothing is commoner than to ſee four or five ſiſters married to the ſame man. Their marriage is not a civil contract, for the husband and wife do not bind themſelves to each other for life, but cohabit together ſo long as they like one another, and ſeparate without the leaſt formality as ſoon as their harmony is interrupted by domeſtic broils. On the evening of the wedding-day, the bride takes an axe, cuts down wood, and makes it up in a bundle; then lays it down before her intended husband's hut, and then goes in and ſits down by her lover, who ſoon after goes to bed with her, making no other complement, than that it is time to go to reſt. As ſoon as any diſcord happens, the women quit their husbands without the leaſt reluctance. The men are not more faithful to the marriage-bed than the women.

When a ſavage is out on an inroad, he often hires a woman for ſome days, or weeks; her parants deſire no better; becauſe they get furrs by this cohabitation. The firſt wife keeps the houſe

and ſows the corn, whilſt her huſband is rambling up and down the country with the other; but, as ſoon as he is returned home, he diſmiſſes her and returns to his firſt wife, unleſs the former happens to have charms capable of effacing all her beauties. The wife has indeed no great reaſon to complain, being in poſſeſſion of a privilege of ſupplying her huſband's place during his abſence. Theſe practices, however are not univerſal; there are ſome amongſt the ſavages, who obſerve punctually all the duties of a married life, and conſider it rather as a ſtate of felicity than a yoke. And tho' the ſavages in general are not addicted to jealouſy, ſome there are however, that puniſh their wives with the utmoſt ſeverity, by cutting off his wife's noſe or ears, nay put her to death; nor is there any other ſatisfaction required of him than to make a preſent to the parents of the deceaſed, in order to dry up their tears. A great many of the ſavages ſo ſoon as they are ſatisfied of one anothers inclinations, they go together without any further delay; and every one that is invited to the marriage brings pre-

ſents conſiſting of axes, knives, egges, fowls, &c. which they leave at the entrance of the hut, and withdraw till ſuch time as the ceremony of making the preſents is ended. Then all the gueſts return and make merry at the door of the hut, and dance and make a thouſand antick poſtures for a conſiderable time, and then the ceremony ends.

Marriage Ceremonies of the Mexicans.

MARRIAGE amongſt the Mexicans is ſolmnized by their prieſts. The couple go to the temple, where one of the ſacrificing prieſts propoſe ſeveral queſtions, in order to examine into their reſolutions. He then takes up the woman's veil and the husband's mantle and with one of his hands ties them together at one corner, as an emblem of the inward tie of their wills. Being thus bound to each other, they are conducted back to their houſe by the prieſt, where they have a good fire prepared, where they go ſeven times ſucceſſively round it, while the prieſt

walks before them; this ceremony being over, they ſit down by the fire to be warmed, which gives the laſt perfection to marriage. The bridegroom brings with him two old men as witneſſes, and the bride two old women. Then follows the marriage feaſt, which being over, the men take the bridegroom aſide, and the women the bride, in order to inſtruct them in thoſe particulars, a knowledge of which is uſeful and neceſſary for their change of condition, and they ſhould diſcharge thoſe duties to which they are bound by their marriage contract; the old people then retire, and leave the married couple to put the laſt hand to the work. The chaſtity of their wives is one of their points of honour; and they puniſh adulterers with death, tho' luſt is one of their predomenant paſſions. Notwithſtanding this, public ſtews are tolerate among them.

Marriage Ceremonies of the Perſians.

INCEST was formerly not merely tolerated, but authoriſed among the

clergy of Perſia. Hiſtory informs us, that ſuch of the ſacerdotal tribe as were ſprung from a ſon married to his mother, were looked upon as moſt worthy to be advanced to eccleſiaſtical dignities & preferments. Their marriages are always celebrated very late, generally about midnight. The bridegroom and the bride ſeat themſelves cloſe by each other on a bed, two prieſts ſit over againſt them, and on each ſide of the prieſts ſit the relations with their hands full of rice, as being the emblem of fruitfulneſs. The prieſt concerned for the bridegroom, lays the forefinger of his right hand on the bride's forehead, and puts the queſtion to her, Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband? She anſwers, Yes: and then the prieſt concerned for her, in the ſame manner asks the bridegroom, Whether he will have her for his wedded wife? who anſwers, Yes. They then join hands, and the bridegroom gives his bride ſome pieces of gold to confirm the contract, and prove that he will for the future provide for her upon all occaſions. After this, a large quantity of rice, is ſtrewed over

their heads. Then the priests and relations bless them, and pray for their happiness. The whole ceremony is performed before the fire.

Marriage Ceremonies of the Japanese.

THE Japanese, generally speaking, marry but one wife; but to make up for this, they are allowed to turn them off whenever they think proper, on the slightest and most trivial occasions. And, least she should boast of having enriched her husband, she never brings any portion or forniture. Should a Japanese bride, by accident bring any money, or other valuable effects into his house, he never fails to return them next day. When a wife dishonours the marriage-bed, her husband has a privilege to put her to death. These extraordinary penalties put the Japanese ladies so much upon their guard, that the practice of modesty becomes habitual to them; and so great is their dispair upon a loss of their honour, tho' it should be even ravished from them by force, that they do not

ſcruple to lay violent hands upon themſelves. When the marriage day is fixed, the bridegroom and the bride go out of town by different ways, each attended by a reſpective retinue, and meet at the foot of a certain hill agreed upon by both. Being arrived, they aſcend to the top of the hill by ſtairs made for that purpoſe, and there enter a tent, and ſeat themſelves on oppoſite ſides, like ambaſſadors aſſembled to make a treaty of peace. The parents of both parties place themſelves behind the bride, and a band of muſic behind the bridegroom, but all without the verge of the tent. The bride and bridegroom then take torches in their hands, and preſent themſelves before the God of marriage, who is placed upon an altar there. This image is repreſented with the head of a dog. The prieſt, whoſe buſineſs it is to perform the marriage ceremony, takes his place hard by the god, and between the two parties, ſeveral lighted lamps are ranged at a ſmall diſtance from the tent; at one of theſe the bride lights her flambeau, which ſhe holds in her hand; at the ſame time uttering certain words dic-

tated to her by the prieſt. The bride-groom then lights his flambeau by that of his bride. Loud acclamations of joy accompany this part of the ceremony, and all the friends and relations of the new married couple then preſent, pay them their complements of congratulations; at the ſame time the prieſt diſmiſſes them with his bleſſing, and their attendants make a large bonefire at the foot of the hill, into which they throw all the toys and play things, with which the young bride, before marriage, was accuſtomed to amuſe herſelf. Others ſhew her a diſtaff and ſome flax, to ſignify that from thence-forward, the prudent management of her family affairs ſhould be the chief object of her attention. The ſolemn ſacrifice of two oxen to the god of marriage concluds the ceremony. The new married couple then return home attended by their relations, and the bride is conducted to her husband's houſe with great triumph. flowers, &c. are ſtrewed upon the way, whilſt an eternal round of joy and pleaſure ſeem promiſed by the flags and ſtreamers wav-

ing in the air, &c. The nuptials commonly last for eight days.

Marriage Ceremonies of the Greeks.

PARTICULAR ceremonies among the Greeks, are as singular and remarkable as other nations. Such as are disposed to unite in the bands of wedlock, make their application to the priest as soon as mass is over, for the solemnization of their nuptials; after which, both parties retire to the marriage-office. The bridegroom stands on the right hand, and the bride on the left, muffled up in a vail or hood; two rings, one of gold, the other of silver are placed near one another on the right side of the communion table; the latter pointing to the right hand, and the former to the left; the priest who performs the ceremony makes several crosses on the bride and bridegroom, puts lighted wax tapers in their hands, purifies, or incenses them in the form of a cross, and accompanies them to the temple. The choir and the deacon alternately beseech heaven that the bride

and bridegroom may prove ſucceſsful in all their undertakings, and may be bleſſed with a numerous and hopeful iſſue: The prayers being finiſhed, the prieſt then preſents the gold ring to the bridegroom, and the ſilver one to the bride, repeating three times, I join N. and B. theſe ſervants of the Almighty here preſent, in the name of the Father, &c. When he has pronounced this form of words, he makes the ſign of the croſs over their heads with the rings, before he puts them on the proper fingers of the right hands. Then the bridegroom exchanges theſe two rings, & the prieſt repeats a long prayer, in which the virtue and dignity of the nuptial ring are tipically compared to Joſeph's ring, and that of Daniel and Thamar. After many ſolemn vows and moving prayers are over, the prieſt ſets a crown on the bridegroom's head, ſaying, This man the ſervant of the Lord is crowned in order to be married to this woman. He then crowns the bride, and repeats the ſame form of words, which is followed with a triple bleſſing. After this a cup is filled with wine, and the prieſt having uttered a benediction over it,

presents it to the bridegroom and bride, he then takes off their crowns, and the ceremony concludes with prayer.

Marriage Ceremonies of the Mahometans.

POLYGAMY is almost universally allowed among all Mahometans; and, it is remarkable that those countries in which it is allowed, are always less peopled than those in which men are confined to one wife. The marriage ceremony is held in high esteem by the Mahometans, yet the priests are not employed in the celebration of it. The cadi, or civil judge gives a sanction to it as an act purely relative to society, which is not looked to be valid without his presence. The husband declares, that he has entered into an engagement to marry such a woman, and to give her a dowry, which she has a right to dispose of at pleasure in case of a divorce. The woman's father or some of her relations assist at this acknowledgment; but she herself, is not present. When this is over, the husband takes possession of his wife, who is brought

to him under a canopy, vieled with a ratinue of friends, relations, ſlaves and muſicians, ſo the ceremony is ended. The Mahometans are allowed to take their female ſlaves to their beds at pleaſure, which they generally buy as we do beaſts in a market. The husband in caſe he can prove adultery againſt his wife, has it in his power to cauſe her to be put in a ſack with ſome ſtones and drowned. But the ladies are ſo cautious in their amours, that few die in the water: and if the husband ſpare their lives, they are happeir than before, becauſe they are obliged to marry their gallant, who, if a chriſtian, muſt embrace Mahomitaſm, or die.

Marriage Ceremonies of the Hottentots.

IF a batchelor or widower is diſpoſed to marry, he does not begin by diſcloſing his paſſion to the maid or widow that has won his heart. His firſt buſineſs is to diſcover the matter to his father or neareſt relation, which if they conſent, they apply to the woman's father or neareſt relation, and demand

her in marriage; which, if they consent, the courtship is over, if not, the match is intirely dropped, and he must apply the same way till both relations are satisfied. They then proceed to the nuptial ceremony, which is as follows: The men and women seat themselves in two different circles; in the center of the men, the bridegroom places himself; then the priest enters, and coming up to the bridegroom, pisses upon him a little. The bridegroom receives the stream with transport, rubbing it briskly all over his body, and making with his long nails several deep scratches in his skin, that the urine may penetrate and soak the farther. The priest then goes to the circle of the women, and coming up to the bride, pisses a little upon her; and she receives and rubs the urine upon her body with as much alacrity as the bridegroom. Then the priest goes again to the bridegroom, and having pissed a little more upon him, away he goes again to the bride, and pisses upon her; and so he goes from the one to the other, till he has exhausted upon them his whole stock of urine, uttering from time to time

to each of them the following good wiſhes: May you live long and happy together; may you have a ſon before the end of the year; may this ſon live to be a comfort to you in your old age; and may this ſon prove to be a man of courage, and a good huntſman. This being the whole of the nuptial ceremony; which being over, the company riſe, and join in preparing a feaſt, which continues for ſeveral days.—— There is one very extraordinary cuſtom that prevails among them; which is, that a widow for every husband ſhe marries after the firſt, is obliged to cut off the joint of a finger beginning at one of the little fingers.

The Hottentots, ſeldom either plow or ſow, but live chiefly by grazing of cattle, and what they take in hunting and fiſhing. The men are of a moderate ſtature, but the women gnenerally ſmall. Their complexion black and thick lips, flat noſes, and ſhort hair. They are not very black when they are born, but take a great deal of pains to make their children ſo with greaſe and ſoot. They go moſtly naked, the women only wearing a ſhort apron with

a mantle of undreſſed ſheep ſkins tied with thongs about their necks, which ſerves them for beds at night, and a winding ſheet when dead. Their breaſts legs and thighs have no covering. They adorn themſelves with rings and beads, and make their bodies ſhine with melted greaſe and fat inſtead of oil. They chuſe the guts of animals rather than other meat, which they eat half raw, without waſhing. Their houſes are round huts conſiſting of one room, covered with hides or mats, where all ages and ſexes lie promiſcuſly, tho' every man has his own wives, ſeldom above three. They expoſe their fathers in the fields to be devoured by wild beaſts, when they become infirm and uſeleſs, as they do their female children, when they have more than one at a birth. They have one rite peculiar to themſelves, which is depriving the males of the left teſticle at eight or nine years of age; at the performance whereof a ſheep is ſacrificed, and eaten by the company invited to it. They always remove their kraal, or town, upon the death of any perſon in it, and ſacrifice a ſheep. It is evident they

believe a future ſtate, and the imortality of the ſoul, by the worſhip they pay to their departed heroes, and by the fears they entertain of their friends appearing to them after death; which is the reaſon of removing their camp, believing the dead never haunt any place but where they died.

Marriage Ceremonies in England.

AFTER the proclamation of the banns, which muſt be publiſhed in the church three ſeveral ſundays or holidays; if no impediment be objected, then the curate asks their reciprocal conſent; which being given, they plight their troth to each other taking each other alternately by the right hand, ſaying, I N. take thee M. to be my wedded wife, (or husband), to have and to hold from this day forward for better and for worſe, for richer for poorer, in ſickneſs and in health, to love and to cheriſh, (the wife ſays), to love, to cheriſh and obey, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and therefore I plight this my troth. After having this mutually plight-

l their faith, they loose their hands, nd the man gives a ring to the woman, ying the same upon the book of common rayer, with the accustomed dues to the riest and clerk. The priest then taking e ring, delivers it to the man, to put upon the fourth finger of the woman's st hand, and the man taught by the iest says, With this ring I thee wed, ith my body I thee worship, &c. Both eel down, the minister says a prayer, ins their right hands together, and adds benediction. Then going to the Lord's ble says or sings a psalm; which being ded, the man and the woman kneeling fore the Lord's table, the priest stand- g at the table says a litany followed by me prayers; which being ended, con- ides with an instruction concerning the ties of man and wife. The ceremony er, each goes a different way, and af- wards meet at a tavern or friend's use, and feast well, and then comes me without making any shew. A glass s round before they go to bed, and hen the hour is come, the bridemen take the brid's garters, which she had be- e untied for that purpose, and puts m in their hats. Then the bridemaids

lead the bride to the bedchamber, undres her and put her to bed. She must lose, or cast away all her pins; woe to her, if she saves one. The bridemaids likewise must not keep any of them, under pain of not being married till Easter following at soonest. The men then accompany the bridegroom to bed to the bride, where the whole company assemble. The men then take the bride's stockings, and the women those of the bridegroom; then set themselves at the bed's feet, and throw the stockings over their heads, and when any one hits the owner of them, it is looked upon as an omen that that person will be married in a short time; and tho this ceremony is looked upon as meer play and foolery, new marriages are often occasioned by such accidents. Mean while the posset goes round, and the new married couple must drink hearty, and when they awake in the morning, a sack posset is given them. The reason of this is obvious.

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